HARAMBEE FLAME

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In This Issue:

Examining 'Anti-Semitism'; From Other Sources: Tanzanian Nutritionist Fights Malnutrition, Uganda Recovering, Marxist-Christian Dialog in Zimbabwe, Racist Attacks On U.S. Campuses, State of African-owned Press in U.S.; H.A.C.O. Meeting Schedule through July; Announcements; H.A.C.O. Quiz; Back In Time(Development of African-American Classical Music/'Jazz'; Poetry

Examining "Anti-Semitism"

In January of this year, State Senator Ernest Chambers, the only African member of the Nebraska State Legislature, was narrowly defeated by Gerald Chizek for the post of chairmanship of the judiciary committee. This defeat followed close behind the release of a report by the Anti-Defamation League(ADL) of B'nai B'rith, "Ernie Chambers: Profile In Extremism," which portrayed Chambers as being a violent extremist and anti-Semitic. At the present time, a controversy(covered in the "From Other Sources" section of last month's FLAME) is bubbling in New York regarding the denial of tenure for a Professor Dube at the State University of New York at Stonybrook. Dube, also an African, has been attacked as being anti-Semitic, etc. by ADL, as well as by the American Jewish Congress and the American Jewish Committee. And, of course, we recall all the hell that was raised by American Jewish groups during the last presidential campaign when Jesse Jackson and Louis Farrakhan made remarks critical of Israel, Zionism, etc.

In view of these and many other similar incidents, we would do well to take a look at what "Semitic" means and who these people are who are so quick to point the finger of "anti-Semitism" at those who would be critical of Zionism, Israel, or practically anyone who happens to be Jewish. Such an examination should be instructive for those of us who feel an obsessive inclination to run up to some Jews and apologize and/or help them condemn some Brother or Sister whenever such a person commits the abomination of criticizing Jews or things Jewish.

First, we must distinguish between "Jewish" and "Semitic," as the two concepts are, by no means, the same. Anyone who follows the religion of Judaism can rightfully claim to be "Jewish." On the other hand, "Semitic" primarily refers to geographic location and/or language. WEBSTER'S NEW WORLD DICTIONARY says the following: "designating or of a major subfamily of the Afro-Asiatic family of languages, usually divided into eastern(Akkadian), northwestern(Phoenician, Aramaic, Hebrew, etc.), and southwestern(Arabic, Ethiopic, etc.) branches." Simply put, while anyone who is a follower

of Judaism is a Jew, most Semitic people are not Jews. Likewise, there is no single set of physical features by which either a Jew or a Semite might be distinguished from other human populations.

Some of us might find the above unbelievable, or certainly that portion taken from the dictionary, because most of the Jews we see here in the U.S. are indistinguishable from other Caucasians. At this point, a comment by a Jew on this matter should serve to enlighten us: "We stress two points: that we are just like you, an essentially white, European people who fled persecution to build a Western-style democracy..."(Passageefrom a statement by Menachem Shalev, former press officer for the Israeli consulate in New York, as quoted in an article, "Confessions Of An Israeli Press Officer," appearing on page 24 of the Feb./March edition of MOTHER JONES. Emphasis added.).

And what about the question of language, since it is an important element in this whole question of who is Semitic and who is Jewish. Aside from English, the language we most generally associate with these European Jews is Yiddish, not a language arising out of African/Asiatic origins, but German--apparently developed during medieval times.

So if we know that "Semitic" and "Jewish" are not synonymous and are aware that most Jews in the U.S. are "white," what is the importance of such information to us? One function that this information serves is to tip us off that charges by American Jewish groups that criticism of Israel and/or of Jews is somehow anti-Semitic is absurd, particularly when the criticism objected to comes from an African. Secondly, an understanding of this protects us from a faulty vision in which we view American Jews generally as being something distinct from other Caucasians in this country. However, this is not to say that there are not groups of Jews with which we share much in common. Many Jews, the Falasha of Ethiopia for example, do have a heritage rooted in Afro-Asian origins.

But all of the above takes us back to the beginning of

this piece--the attacks against Africans in America by the ADL, Jewish Defense League, and other such groups when these Africans "have the nerve" to criticize Jews and/or Jewish organizations; and, more importantly, the ease with which Jewish individuals and groups are able to get us to pounce upon each other over such criticizing.

How is it that Jews in this country are able exercise so much power in moving against Africans, like Ernie Chambers, Louis Farrakhan, Professor Dube, et al. The most obvious answer is two-fold: that they have managed to gain a very firm foothold in the commercial media, having representation in decision-making positions way out of proportion to their representation in the U.S. population as a whole, which allows them to have major power in shaping/influencing public opinion; and that they have maintained a high level of influence over and sometimes outright control of particular "negro organizations." But what more profound thing have American Jews been able to do? Through their positions in the communications media, they have kept us reminded of their holocaust and, thus, laid a collective guilt trip on America and much of the rest of the Western world. By virtue of the fact that most of us(Africans in America) identify with America and share the collective American psyche, many of us share this sense of guilt. But the symptom of this guilt as manifested in us is our sense of identification with Jews. We pick up on their reminders to us of their holocaust and identify it or associate it with our own holocaust. To put this another way, we see ourselves as America's "niggers" and see Jews as America's "other niggers."

As a result of the above, many of us are embarrassed and actually offended when one of us makes what some Jews may deem to be an anti-Semitic remark. Of course, this is more true with respect to those of us who are among the "respectable/responsible leadership"(as determined by the Caucasian establishment) and/or who are significantly Christianized than with respect to other African folks here.

We, having been victim of the holocaust of slavery, should certainly have empathy with other groups who have been and/or are oppressed. We should have empathy for those six million-plus Jews whom were exterminated during the German Occupation. Yet, at the same time, we have to recognize that the holocaust suffered by Jews was no more terrible than was our loss of maybe as many as fifty million of our people during the Middle Passage and that, while Jews in this country are prospering generally, our situation is, comparatively, very poor. We have to recognize that, while some Jews do have, or see themselves as having, interests in common with ours; others, aligned with their fellow Euro-Americans, are operating to keep us subjugated. In those cases where specific Jews and/or Jewish organizations act in a manner consistent with our interests, then we should be pleased. But when specific Jews and/or Jewish organizations oppose our interests, then we must fight them. Moreover, we must cease to permit groups like ADL, American Jewish Committee, etc. to set us against each other over the issue of alleged "anti-Semitism." Such in-group fighting wastes time and energy we could be spending on dealing with <u>our</u> problems.

African people are, like other people of color here, a a subjugated group in America. And those who hold the economic and/or political power by which we are subjugated have various names: DuPont, Smith, Perot, Dailey, Steinberg, all sorts of names. But the one thing they have in common is that, whether they be Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, or otherwise, they are all Caucasian. And, in our efforts to get up off our backsides and become a free and independent people, we have to be able to identify those forces that rule over us; and, in so doing, we owe no special reverence to those whose names might end with "stein," "zog," "berg," etc.

-Wopashitwe Mondo Byen we Langa(aka David Rice)/Editor

From Other Sources

Tanzanian Nutritionist Makes Breakthrough

"A Tanzanian nutritionist may have discovered a simple way to save the lives of some of the 80 million undernourished people in sub-Saharan Africa, according to Charles Rukuni in the Gemini News Service of London. Dr. Alexander Mosha of the Food Security Team of the Southern African Development Coordinating Conference has seen that treating the undernourished with special foods, minerals, and vitamins does not work.

"'..The method involves adding germinating seed flour to porridge given to children during the weaning period, from about four months. The ingredients have been available for ages and are used mainly for brewing beer'.

"'..the addition of germinated seed flour...to thick porridge helps break down starches that are otherwise (indigestible) for small children and thus contribute to malnutrition'. Trials of 'power flour' weaning foods in Tanzanian villages showed the children ate more and gained weight."

-Above passages excerpted from "Power Flour," an article which appears on page 5 of the April edition of WORLD PRESS REVIEW.

Uganda Recovering From Past Chaos

"A year after Yoweri Museveni's National Resistance Army(NRA) captured Kampala, most of Uganda is at peace and a new grassroots political network of resistance councils is flourishing...

"There have been other gains as well. Guided by the 10-point program, its pragmatic and popular platform, the ruling National Resistance Movement(NRM) has cracked down on corruption and tribalism and begun to rebuild the shattered economy...However, the balance is still precarious...

"The key trouble is Uganda's north/south division, which is simultaneously ethnic and economic. The less fertile, less populous north has, since the days of British colonialism, provided the soldiers for Uganda's armies. The south, with 70% of Uganda's population, is more developed and produces most of Uganda's wealth. Coffee is now the country's main foreign exchange earner...

"After the NRM/NRA captured power in January 1986, a coalition government was installed...Against the advice of many NRM colleagues, Museveni opted for this structure to show the NRM's spirit of reconciliation. Everyone, except human rights criminals, could have a new start, he said...

"...Resistance committees were formed and they have distributed essential commodities like soap and sugar at low prices. Two schools have started politicization courses for civil servants and soldiers. Citizens were urged to give up their arms while ex-UNLA(Uganda National Liberation Army, the armed coalition of several Ugandan groups which, along with Tanzanian troops, toppled Idi Amin in 1979) soldiers were offered an amnesty. ..

"...There are too few NRM cadres to carry out too many vital tasks. The rate of inflation is 200% due to the devastated infrastructure, a production level below that of 1960, and the acute shortage of foreign exchange. For instance half of the country's $400 million annual earnings from coffee go to pay off the foreign debt of $1.7 billion, largely contracted(and wasted) during Obote's regime(1962-1971)...

"By far the biggest opposition to the NRM and the NRA comes from rebels in the northern Acholi districts of Gulu and Kitgum...

"At present Museveni intends to fight the rebels, while offering an amnesty to those who are not actual criminals. Museveni also insists that his army sit and wait for rebel attacks. Troops are forbidden to chase rebels

into villages since this will only cause civilian deaths and will lose NRM/NRA support.

"With Museveni and the NRM, Uganda has entered an era of fragile hope. The killing has all but stopped...Workers are permitted to organize and to strike and peasants can run their village affairs..."

-Above passages excerpted from "Nightmare Years Fade In The Dawn Of Fragile Hope," an article which appears on page 10 of the March 18 edition of the GUARDIAN.

Politics And Religion In Zimbabwe

"University of Zimbabwe theologians who helped organize the forum(African Christian-Marxist Dialog), held in February at Harare's Anglican Cathedral, believe it may have been independent Africa's first formal 'Christian-Marxist Dialog'. Though liberation theology has a long history in Latin America and inside South Africa, it is relatively new to black-led Africa.

"Ironically, Zimbabwean Christians and Marxists were brought together by a book from Latin America: 'Fidel and Religion,' a dialog between Cuban President Fidel Castro and a Brazilian Catholic priest...Impressed by the groundswell of interest, Brickhill(manager of Harare's radical Grassroots bookstore) began the work of bringing together a group of 'Communist Marxists' and 'Christian Marxists' for a public discussion of issues raised by the book.

"This is, after all, a country whose president, Canaan Banana is a Methodist minister and author of two works of liberation theology. Robert Mugabe, prime minister and leader of the country's Marxist ruling party, the Zimbabwe African National Union, is a former Catholic school teacher deeply influenced by the church.

"Banana himself probed the ambiguous relationship between a socialist government and Christian churches in the keynote address...

Siege," an article which appears on page S-3 of the March 30 edition of UNITY.

State Of African-owned Press In U.S.

"The DEFENDER is black Chicago's newspaper of record and one of only three black dailies in the U.S.--the others are the NEW YORK DAILY CHALLENGE and the ATLANTA DAILY WORLD.

"...there are about 320 black-owned, black oriented publications in the U.S...

"...the addition of well-trained black professionals to the staffs of black publications would help alleviate one of the major problems plaguing the black press: poor quality. Resource-starved black publications suffer inordinately from basic journalistic flaws. Typographical errors are common and many papers fill pages with public-relations fluff. Most black publications hold editorial views that are identified with liberal Democrats, but many are unsophisticated in their political understanding.

"'Black publications get about one-half of one percent of all ad dollars,'...What is most vexing, he(Steve G. Davis, director of the National Newspaper Publishers Association, the organization that represents most of the country's black publications) added, 'is the reluctance of black ad agencies to target money for the black press'.

"... The NNPA has created an advertising committee, consisting of publishers from certain publications, that meets with top executive personnel of the various corporations from which they seek advertising..."

-Above passages excerpted from "America's Black Press Survives In Reagan Era," an article which appears on page 8 of the March 18-24 edition of IN THESE TIMES.

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H.A.C.O. Meetings

Sun. April 26	Tue. May 5	Tue. June 2	Sun. July 5
	Sun. May 10	Sun. June 7	Tue. July 14
	Tue. May 19	Tue. June 16	Sun. July 19
	Sun. May 24	Sun. June 21	Tue. July 28
		Tue. June 30	

All Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization meetings are from 6-8 p.m. We urge you Sisters and Brothers of ours on the outside to get involved with us. If you want information about us, simply write to: Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization; P.O. Box 2500; Lincoln, NB; 68502-0500. If you wish to give an educational and/or cultural presentation, simply write to us "Attn: Education Chairman" and explain what kind of presentation you wish to give, what equipment or other aids you will need to bring or need to be provided. If you wish to present a program, notify us at least a couple of weeks in advance. If you simply wish to attend a meeting, a week's notice will usually be adequate. You may also contact us by calling 471-3161(ext. 380 or 379) between the hours of 12:30 and 3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Ask for the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization sponsor.

We believe that it is important for you to take an interest in the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization, not only because it will help us in our work in bringing a positive African consciousness to our imprisoned members, but because you too will benefit from our programs. We are aware of no organizations out there in the African communities in the Omaha-Lincoln area that are actively involved in the promotion and development of African consciousness. And it should be evident to you, as you observe drug and alcohol addiction, "black-on-black" crime, political ignorance, economic ill-health, and other such problems all around you, that there is a dire need for development of such consciousness.

CULTURAL AWARENESS IS KEY TO LIBERATION.

Announcements

The Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization is looking for more submissions of poetry so that we can, at long last, put together the third volume of AFRICAN POETS IN NEBRASKA. Send your submissions to: AFRICAN POETS/ HARAMBEE FLAME; Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization; P.O. Box 2500; Lincoln, NE; 68502. Also give a brief biography of yourself and be sure to enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

THE BLACK SCHOLAR is soliciting manuscripts for review for its May-June 1987 issue on "The Crisis of the Black Male." Essays should be typed, double-spaced, and no longer than 20-25 pages with footnotes at the end of the article. A short biography of the author should be included. Articles must be received by April 15 for consideration. Please send two xerox copies of the essay, review or poetry along with a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Editor/THE BLACK SCHOLAR; P.O. Box 2869; Oakland, CA; 94609.

ACT-SO(Afro-Academic, Cultural, Technological and Scientific Olympics) is still in need of volunteer coaches, judges, sponsors and ACT-SO committee members. For more information, contact Wilma Hogan, ACT-SO chairperson, at 345-6227.

African American Images has available a number of books, as well as both audio and video cassettes dealing with issues related the rearing of our children and youth. For information, write to: African American Images; 9204 Commercial, Suite 308; Chicago, Ill.; 60617. Or call (312) 375-9682.

Send your announcements of events of concern to African people to: HARAMBEE FLAME; P.O. Box 2500; Lincoln, NE; 68502-0500.

H.A.C.O. Quiz

(We presented the following questions to the H.A.C.O. membership recently. They are designed to give you an indication of how well you keep up with history and current events and how effectively you can think through problems. Take time out and give these questions a try.)

Why did most of the civil rights and human rights activity on the part of African people in the U.S., that was so visible in the 1960s, virtually come to an end?

What things have led to the development of what some people are calling the "black under-class"?

Why are so many African nations dependent, for food and other goods, on aid from foreign countries?

Why are apparently large numbers of American-born African men and women having trouble maintaining good relationships?

What steps do you think would be effective in keeping American-born African men out of prison?

It has been more than a year since Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier was run out of Haiti. Why are our Sisters and Brothers there still raising hell?

Unemployment among African people in the U.S. is at least twice what it is among Caucasians. Should we push local and state governments and the federal government to solve this inequity or should/can we take steps to deal with this on our own(by the efforts of our own communities)? What steps can we take?

If it is true that the U.S. public school system is racist, what can we do to stop the effects on our children of this racism? How much does integration in the school system do to solve the problem of racism?

What major factors have prevented African people in Azania(South Africa) from being able, thus far, to overthrow the Caucasian minority government there?

Back In Time

"'With the enactment of Code No. 111 in 1894(in New Orleans), forcing the Creoles into the uptown neighborhoods, and the 1896 separate-but-equal statutes, the subsequent amalgamation between Creole and non-Creole Negroes resulted in a stylistic synthesis called Jazz.'

"'The Creoles of Color were hard hit. Bit by bit, they were pushed out of any job a white man could use, and they lost their place in the downtown parade. Quite naturally(says drummer Baby Dodds) the colored fellows didn't get any of the better jobs. Eventually and against their will, they went uptown and sat in with their darker brothers.'

"As Creole violinist Paul Domingues said: 'See, us Downtown people, we didn't think so much of this Uptown jazz until we couldn't make a living otherwise.'

"So it was that jazz developed as a result of the all-class national oppression, which forced the more trained musicians and their European influences to play music with the blues-based Negro workers and peasants."

-from FIRE MUSIC: A POLITICAL HISTORY OF JAZZ
by Rob Backus

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Some

some africans in america born
know african selves not
no
collar leash theyselves
yes
to white america
hard and tight
no can break away
like tiny dog not break away
from big master with monkey grip

these more pets than pets
master confident to know
he let leash go
these ones move not
no
but stand with timid eyes
and feet stuck to concrete good
move not 'til master say they should
second guess him sometime awhile
fetch the slippers
put eyes to ground 'til master smile

by some magic they black faces blush
and feet shuffle fast to rush
to the white mayor they trust
give them keys to the city
unlocking nothing at all for us.

-Mondo

FLAME Editorial Policy

The HARAMBEE FLAME, the monthly publication of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization(parent chapter of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization, Inc.), is a pan-Africanist newsletter. This means that the FLAME's priority, with respect to news and views, is African people, events, and developments which affect us and are, or should be, of concern to us. The FLAME does not recognize any artificial distinctions between African people based solely on place of birth. Therefore, references to African people are made on the basis of our common ancestry. An exception to this policy is the reprinting of articles, or excerpts thereof, from other publications, in which cases we do not alter the terms used therein to fit our editorial policy.

Articles contained in the FLAME do not necessarily represent the official positions of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization unless they are accompanied by a statement identifying the views as being those of the organization. Generally speaking, all unsigned articles are by the editor.

We encourage you to submit articles to the FLAME. Please enclose with your submission a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Articles should not exceed 900 words. Short stories are subject to the same restriction with respect to length. We also welcome poetry and graphics. Send your submissions to: HARAMBEE FLAME
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